

Story 1220 (1991 Tape 2)

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54

Location: Çeşme, kaza town of
İzmir Province

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Mustafa Pasha Vindicated

The city of Çeşme lies at one end of a large bay known as the Bay of Çeşme. Also along the shore of that bay there is large castle, which some say is faulty in its construction. I have no way of knowing whether that allegation is true or false. Hostile ships entering the bay had fired upon this castle, and within its walls were many cannonballs from such attacks. Perhaps there is really some structural defect in this castle, but I could not prove it. I do know, however, that the castle makes a beautiful sight for people entering the bay.

It was built during the Ottoman period. One of the Ottoman sultans sent Mustafa Pasha¹ and a large number of soldiers to build this castle at Çeşme. The soldiers who were employed in this long undertaking had to be provided for. They could not

¹Pasha now means a military general. In Ottoman times the word often referred to a person with responsibilities that went beyond the military. He might be the military governor of an area as large as a province. There were so many Mustafa Pashas in Turkish history that it would require some competent research to determine who this Mustafa Pasha really was. If there is any historicity to this tale, it would have to be documented by local records, for there is no reference to it in such major historical works as Stanford Shaw's great History of the Ottoman Empire or Bernard Lewis's The Emergence of Modern Turkey.

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very well live in the streets without any protection from the rain and fog and hot sunshine.

which provided living quarters for the troops. Even into middle of the twentieth century, parts of that inn remained. One part was converted into a vaulted café, and during my childhood my grandfather was the manager of that café. Another part remained what it had always been, a hotel.

It took quite some time to construct the caravansary its inn, and much of the work on it was being carried on at the same time as the building of the castle. I do not know how many years were involved

Gossiping and trouble making seem to be part of human nature, and after a while there began to be discussions that were damaging to Mustafa Pasha. People close to the sultan criticized what Mustafa Pasha was doing. They said to the ruler, "You sent that fellow to Çeşme to build a castle, but what is he doing? He is building caravansaries and inns--and who knows what else? He seems to be founding a sultanate of his own!"

They filled up the sultan² with such talk, and it was not long before the ruler was persuaded that Mustafa Pasha was

²The narrator here says that they blew him up with such remarks, using the Turkish verb şişirmek.

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guilty of some sort of treachery. Of course the activities and intentions of the pasha were never investigated, and he was never questioned and allowed to give any evidence in his own defense, as he would be in a modern trial. It would have been too inconvenient to go from İstanbul to Çeşme to carry on such an inquiry. The sultan simply issued an order to his executioners,

down there and behead him!" Mustafa Pasha was killed in this way, and his body was buried in an open area between two cemeteries.

When the executioners returned and reported this to the sultan, they also told him what they had seen at Çeşme. They said, "That fellow was really working on the castle, and it is now about half finished. The caravansary and inn that he built were for just one purpose, and that was to protect and house the soldiers who were constructing the castle."

After the sultan had heard this report, and after others given similar accounts of what had been going on at Çeşme, he changed his thoughts about the whole matter. He concluded that a serious mistake had been made in having him killed.

After a while the local people built a ³tomb over the place in the field where he had been buried. By then it was generally agreed that Mustafa Pasha had been murdered, not properly

³The Turkish word

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convicted and executed. They referred to him as the Murdered
(Maktul) Mustafa Pasha. But, in time, that was changed to
Makbul (Esteemed) Mustafa Pasha.